



Arizona Department of Public Safety

- For Immediate Release -

Thursday, December 04, 2008

Man arrested for vandalizing photo enforcement camera site with pick axe

An Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) Officer arrested Travis Munroe Townsend, 26, of Glendale, Ariz. for vandalizing a stationary photo enforcement camera site on the Loop 101 at 59th avenue in Glendale with a large pick axe. Mr. Townsend was booked into the 4th Avenue Jail in Phoenix on the charges of Criminal Damage (ARS 13-1602.A2) a class 4 felony, Interference with a Traffic Control Device (ARS 28-649A) a class 1 misdemeanor and Criminal Trespass (ARS 13-1502) a class 3 misdemeanor.

Mr. Townsend could face up to three years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$150,000 for the criminal damage charge. For the interference with a traffic control device charge Townsend could spend up to six months in jail and pay a fine of up to \$2,500. For Criminal Trespassing Townsend could face up to 30 days in jail and fine of up to \$500. Townsend may also be charged for retribution for the damaged protective case, and labor involved with the repair and replacement of the case.

The events leading to the arrest began on Wednesday, December 3, 2008 at about 11:42 p.m. when a DPS motorcycle officer who was parked underneath the westbound side of the 59th Avenue overpass on the Loop 101 heard some very loud banging noises. The officer then observed a man wielding a large pick axe and swinging it very hard at the stationary photo enforcement camera site. The suspect struck the metallic and glass housing that protects the photo enforcement camera equipment at the site with his large pick axe at least six times.

The small puncture marks the suspect inflicted on the camera's protective housing had no impact on the integrity of the camera system inside. A new protective housing was installed at this camera site following the incident, however, resulting in several thousand dollars in damages tied to the suspect's actions. The site was back in full operation today at about 11 a.m.

"Any type of tampering with a photo enforcement site can result in extremely serious, life changing charges being filed against a person," said DPS Director Roger Vanderpool. "From criminal damage charges to charges related to interfering with judicial proceedings that can carry lengthy jail terms and hefty fines, the ramifications a person could face for tampering with a photo enforcement site are extremely serious. DPS Officers will continue to be vigilant at all hours of the day and night and stand ready to respond quickly to reports or first hand observances of persons tampering with or vandalizing photo enforcement sites in any manner."

(Photo attached)

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